

EMPLOYMENT

REPORT OF ROYAL COMMISSION—GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Hon. Lorna Marsden: Honourable senators, I should like to ask the Leader of the Government in the Senate about a different matter, namely, the response to the royal commission report on equity in employment which was brought before members in the other place last Friday. As I am sure the honourable senator knows, Judge Abella's report made very clear recommendations about the need for certain kinds of information which are the basis for establishing some kind of employment equity among women, the handicapped, visible minorities and native people in Canada. I have searched in vain among the papers provided for some reference to what will be in the 1986 census which would allow the minister to proceed with her plans for creating employment equity. Can the Leader of the Government in the Senate tell us when the order in council will be tabled for the 1986 census plan?

Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I shall have to make inquiries about that.

Senator Marsden: I should like to ask a supplementary question. In the same package of material the Honourable Robert de Cotret pointed out that the Treasury Board, of which he is President, is immediately proceeding to conduct a survey to try to ascertain information on the employment of indigenous people and disabled people in the federal workplace. I would like to know how the government thinks that such a survey will help, since the Treasury Board, having discovered its own internal employment practices, will have no point of reference since it does not know how many people who are indigenous or handicapped there are in the labour force at the present time. Could the Leader of the Government get some clarification and amplification from the President of the Treasury Board about the purposes of such a survey?

Senator Roblin: The Treasury Board up to now has been operating under the same rules for the past 16 years, so my honourable friend need not be surprised if it takes a little time to put things right.

Senator Marsden: I have another question about this same series of announcements that were made last week. Many questions have been asked in the other place which have clarified issues. There is a great emphasis placed upon fairness in these announcements. I would like to point out, however, that crown corporations are required to report on their employment equity plan by September 1986 whereas other industries under federal jurisdiction of a certain size are not required to report for three years. For example, Air Canada will have to report in September 1986 about employment equity plans inside the corporation, but its competition in the marketplace—and the Air Canada Act requires that the airline be competitive and profit-making—CP Air and other airlines will have three years before they are required to report upon their internal plans for employment equity. Could the Leader of the Government clarify for us where the fairness lies in this proposal?

Senator Roblin: The fairness lies in history. History indicates that crown corporations such as Air Canada have been asked for some time now to take this question of balance, equity and fairness between various applicants for jobs into account and, indeed, they have been assuring the government for some time that they are doing so. In that case it is not such a difficult thing to ask them to produce the facts and figures in a short order of time. As far as I am aware, the same statement cannot be made generally of other organizations that are not crown corporations.

Senator Marsden: I am sure that Air Canada will have no difficulty whatsoever producing an employment equity plan because they have been asked by previous governments to produce those numbers and have done so. My question related not to their ability to produce it but to the fairness in the marketplace, that is, if one employer is put at a disadvantage by the government's program in comparison to another one, it seems to me that there is an aspect of unfairness involved here. I wonder if he would care to elaborate or clarify further on that.

Senator Roblin: I have to admit that my honourable friend is right, that there is no such thing as perfect fairness or perfect equity in this world. We strive for it but we do not always get it. We have to produce plans, however, that we think are practical and are within the capacity of the various people we ask to do something to do it in the normal course of their business with all convenient speed. That is what we are trying to do here. It does not mean that nothing happens for three years because a lot of things will happen in that time, but what it does mean is that the report as to what has been done and what is planned has to be available in three years.

DELAYED ANSWERS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators will be pleased to know that I have some delayed answers that pretty well bring us up to date. In view of the sensibilities of Senator Frith about the way in which I respond to these—I will have to stop making that reference because it is getting a little tiresome to my old friend and it certainly is to me—if any honourable senator wants the answer to his question read aloud, I will be glad to do so.

THE BUDGET

PREPARATION—USE OF CONSULTANTS

Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government): The first delayed answer is to a question raised in the Senate on January 23, 1985, by the Honourable H.A. Olson, regarding the budget preparation and the use of consultants.

(The answer follows:)

Mr. William Mackness is a Special Policy Advisor to the Minister of Finance. His salary entitlement as a member of the Minister's exempt staff is in the range of \$68,000 - \$80,000. During the period of this assignment,